



Kevin Smith drives Aggie defense

Sophomore defensive back eyes A&M interception record

By Richard Tijerina
Of The Battalion Staff

Texas A&M sophomore cornerback Kevin Smith figures he'd look pretty good behind the wheel of a Porsche.

Smith remembered the day when he was a skinny freshman, talking to former A&M graduate assistant Tim Lewis. Lewis told him it almost was possible to have 20 interceptions in four years.

Lewis said he'd give his Porsche to Smith if he did. That was one year and eight interceptions ago.

Smith looked the other way at the wall in the Aggie locker room that lists career school records, and saw he was only six interceptions short of Lester Hayes' all-time mark. Then he realized he still has almost two-and-a-half years left at A&M.

"If I get it, it'll be a great accomplishment, but right now I'm just trying to help us win," Smith said. "If I do those things, the records will come."

If he keeps on going the way he has been playing, Smith just might be All-Everything by the time he graduates. He leads the team in interceptions and has posted 24 tackles, 17 of those unassisted.

Not too bad, considering Smith never thought he'd play this early in his career. But the sophomore had a large amount of playing time in 1988 as a true freshman, and Coach R.C. Slocum, then A&M's defensive coordinator, credited Smith's confidence for the amount of games he played in.

But starting a game and playing as much as he did was too much for even Smith to have hoped for. He had two interceptions in 1988.

"I didn't expect to play at all," Smith said. "Physically, I didn't think I was able. I was maybe 150 pounds at the most. A&M was coming off a Cotton Bowl year and they had a lot of talent, but I wanted to go to a team that was a winner."

"I knew during recruiting that going to a team that was a winner would make it harder for me to play. But playing as a freshman was really more than I expected."

It's a wonder that Smith is even playing here at all. He led his West Orange-Stark team to consecutive state championships in 1986-87, and other schools that wanted him, including Louisiana State and Oklahoma, started talking to him during his junior year.

A&M didn't bother sending him a

letter until halfway through his senior year.

"I really wasn't recruited by A&M until late," he said. "They didn't start recruiting me until after the state championship game (in mid-December, 1987). After that, I scheduled a visit. I'd always wanted to go to A&M. I was in love with the Kevin Murray era there."

What Smith probably fell more in love with was the Aggies' style of defense, which allowed defensive backs to cover wide receivers in man-to-man coverage. All the other schools Smith visited wanted him as a wide receiver, but Smith said playing man-to-man is where his heart is.

"I liked the style of play that A&M uses on defense — man-to-man coverage with the blitz up front," he said. "That's what I love — just me and the guy I'm covering. I figure he can't beat me, and if he does he's right there in front of me."

Receivers haven't had many chances to beat Smith, though. Ever since Bobby Jack Goforth caught a touchdown pass over him in 1988, Smith hasn't given up a passing touchdown.

That streak seemed unlikely to continue in 1989, as A&M played Houston and its high-scoring, long-throwing Run-and-Shoot offense. The Aggies shut UH Heisman Trophy candidate Andre Ware down and won 17-13. Smith said it was his most fun game of the year.

"We played man the whole game," Smith said. "Some people don't like to play it because you get tired of playing it every down, but I love it. You have to be fearless."

"Eventually, I'll get beat, but there's a difference between getting beat and getting burned."

Getting beat's been something the Aggie secondary have spent too much time doing this season, much to Slocum's chagrin. Going into the season, Slocum said this year's secondary, with Smith and Mickey Washington at cornerbacks and Gary Jones and Larry Horton at safeties, would be one of the strongest A&M's ever had.

But so far, the Aggies have been burned by the long play. A&M is ranked seventh in pass defense in the Southwest Conference, giving up 205.1 yards a game. The only SWC team to have given up more passing touchdowns than A&M is Southern Methodist.

"We have to stick to the fundamentals," Smith said. "We're making the big plays and we're catching people's eyes, but when you look at the



Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhack

Just as Kevin Smith pressured Jamie Gill in the Texas Tech game, he hopes to put the heat on Donald Hollas Saturday.

statistics, they threw for 250 yards passing. We've had injuries. But we've got some great guys back there with a lot of athletic ability."

"We're 5-2 and on our way to the Cotton Bowl if we win the rest of our games, so at the end we can start asking questions (about our performance). It's not where you start, it's where you finish."

The Aggies are on their way to a better finish than 1988's 7-5 record. In a turbulent season that saw NCAA probation and the resignation of their head coach, the Aggies were hurt in the recruiting season. But when Smith was recruited, the Aggies reigned supreme in the SWC. They were the three-time conference champions, and Smith was attracted to A&M's winning tradition.

"I wanted to be able to win eight or nine games a year. I'm not saying I'm spoiled, but in reality I am. I

Giants lose Reuschel as Series resumes

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — World Series game 3 is tonight and already the San Francisco Giants, down 2-0 to Oakland, are in more trouble. Rick Reuschel will not be able to start the fourth game because of a sore shoulder.

"We just have to wait and see. It's a day-to-day thing," Giants manager Roger Craig said.

Reuschel, hit hard in losing Game 2, was tagged in the right shoulder by a line drive in batting practice Tuesday.

Don Robinson, one of several San Francisco pitchers hurt this season, will take Reuschel's place. Robinson has not started since Sept. 25 because of a bad knee and has pitched just 13 1-3 innings since Sept. 3.

"If things keep going on like this, Dave Dra-

vecky and Mike Krukow will be our starters," Robinson said.

Scott Garrelts will oppose Oakland ace Dave Stewart on Friday in a rematch of Game 1 starters, ending the series-record 11-day layoff caused by an earthquake. Mike Moore, a winner in Game 2, will start for the Athletics on Saturday evening.

Clear skies, light winds and temperatures in the low 60s are forecast for the Games 3 and 4. There is a chance of rain for Game 5, if one is played. If the series goes back to Oakland, the weather might be a problem. The Rolling Stones, however, will not be.

The Athletics, the Oakland Coliseum and the rock group worked out a compromise that will al-

low the World Series to continue as planned despite a schedule conflict.

The Rolling Stones have sold 120,000 tickets for concerts at the Coliseum on Nov. 4-5, and their contract allows them to move into the stadium five days earlier to set up their massive stage. Should the World Series go back to Oakland, that would've been a problem.

Concert promoter Bill Graham said Thursday that the Rolling Stones agreed to move back their concerts a day if the World Series needs Game 7 on Nov. 1. If so, the group, the Athletics and the Coliseum will together absorb the overtime construction costs.



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